

# The Semaphore

*A Publication of the* TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

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Summer 2020

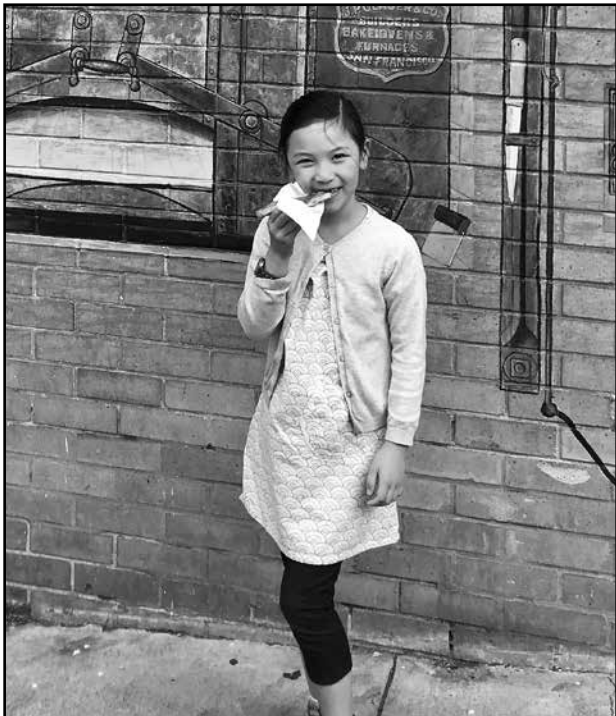


GOODBYE, COLUMBUS

# INTRODUCING KIDS CORNER

by Sarah Kliban  
kids@thd.org

**K**ids Corner, this new *Semaphore* column, evolved after many discussions with THD's Board about how to reach more families and the kids in our community. We thought we'd start with actually hearing from the kids themselves. The original plan was to have a THD kid reporter meeting up with friends and asking the questions. Due to C-19, we have opted for general interviews of a few neighborhood kids to start. The six kids in this issue are all students at Yick Wo Elementary. In the future, we hope our kid reporter will be able to interview kids on the street.



© JOHNNY LEUNG

## COCO LEUNG

### *What is your favorite thing about North Beach?*

"I love going to Molinari's. It's this meat place that we get coppa at. It's really Italian—it has noodles and pasta and all these different kinds of meats. The people who work there are really, really nice. I get the coppa there. They give us a sample when they're slicing it. Another place I love is Liguria Bakery. I love the pizza bread because it's just so perfect. I don't like cheese on my pizza so it's like "Yay." My dad used to go there when he was a kid. He lived right next door. Back then it was 75 cents."

### *What is the worst thing about Covid-19 for you?*

"Probably not being able to see my family."

### *And the best thing?*

"I get to do a lot of art."

### *Any advice for other kids who are dealing with Covid?*

You should believe. Believe you can get through it and believe that this will be over.

## BEN KLIBAN

### *Do you love North Beach?*

"North Beach is a great place—with lots of sun.



© SARAH KLIBAN

If we're lucky, we have good summers...you know that famous guy that said the coldest winter of his life was summer in North Beach?"

### *What is your favorite thing about North Beach?*

"I love Joe DiMaggio Playground because that's pretty much the only place I do get to exercise, ride my bike, and ride my scooter and all the other stuff I do, and practice a little tennis once in a while. I do have a favorite restaurant—Tommaso's. I get to have quality time with my family there, and I get to have dinner with my grandma there. It has great quality food. They're very friendly, the owners and the workers. A lot of the workers are the owners—so it's a little kaleidoscope. I just started ordering the Spaghetti Broccoli, but the Spinach Pizza is amazing! That's probably some of the best pizza I've ever tried."

### *What is the worst thing about Covid-19 for you?*

"We're cooped up like chickens in our homes. As soon as it's over, I want to play in all the parks. Oh, and eat in at Tommaso's."



© ESTHER CHEN

## NATHAN HUANG

### *What is your favorite thing about North Beach?*

"My favorite place is the North Beach Library. It is new and big and has a lot of fun activities like Lego Time. I also like the books. Some books are big, and some are small. I like the big ones best. I also like the playground. I can climb to the top of the fish. I like the tennis part the best because I play tennis with my dad there."

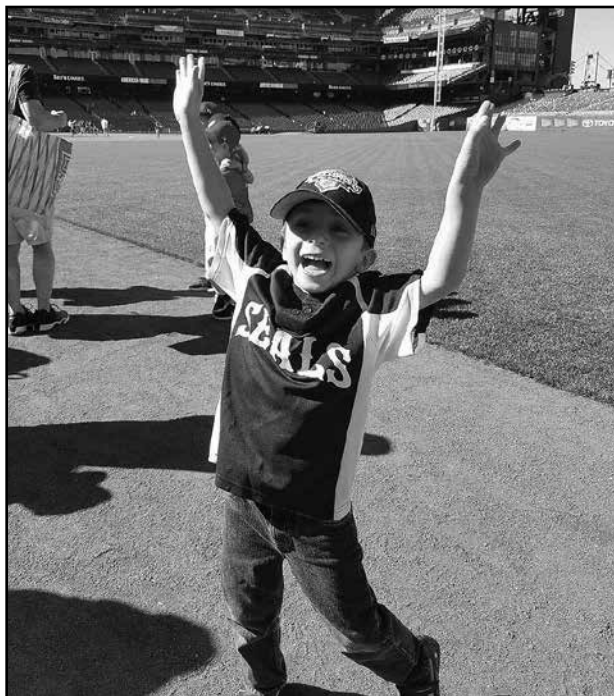
### *What is the worst thing about Covid-19 for you?*

"I miss the library the most. I also miss watching football games. And playing tennis with my dad. That's one of the first things I want to do when things go back to normal."

## JACK ALVARADO

### *What is your favorite thing about North Beach?*

"I like the Halloween and Christmas decorations in the neighborhood. I really like Victoria Pastry and the cookies with the sprinkles. My favorite restaurant is North Beach Sushi—the edamame and the soup espe-

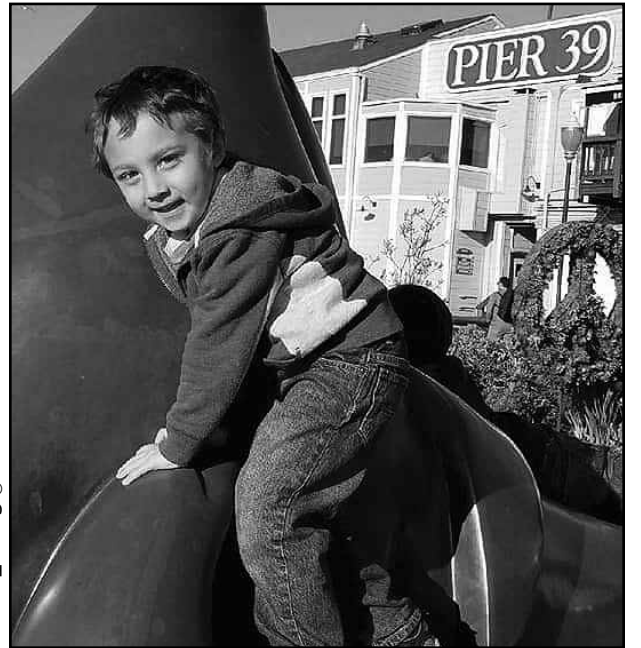


© CHRISTY TUREVILLE

cially. I could eat the soup all day! The owner is really nice, and when we were ordering sushi, he thanked us for being loyal customers—and he gave us four rolls of toilet paper."

### *What is the worst thing about Covid-19 for you?*

"That's a little bit sad. The hardest part is not being able to go outside and go do new things, like exhibits and stuff. I'm looking forward to going to Target first to get some toys. Then I want to go to Joe DiMaggio Playground."



© CHRISTY TUREVILLE

## BLAKE ALVARADO

### *What is your favorite thing about North Beach?*

"I love the Aquarium by the Bay! I heard that they're putting in dolphins! I imagine the dolphins swimming in a heart shape. That's the first thing I want to do when we can go out. Then I want to go to the beach. I also love the sushi place (North Beach Sushi). I love the blue soda."

### *What is the worst thing about Covid-19 for you?*

"That I don't get to go outside. If the Covid wasn't here, I'd go to the Aquarium."



© EMMA MACCHIARINI

## HANNA MORRIS

### *What is your favorite thing about North Beach?*

"I love school (Yick Wo) because I love to learn, and I just like being with other kids. I also love Tony's Pizza because the pizza is so delicious you won't stop eating. You could try the pizza with the prosciutto on it. I could eat almost half the pizza. I also LOVE gelato from Gelato Classico! My favorite is a mixture. I love ice cream more than pizza. But I do not love gelato more than I love school. Being with my friends. I want to go back to school. I love recess because we play—anything."

### *Any advice for other kids who are dealing with Covid?*

"Stay six feet away from each other, and always wear a mask."

Please stay tuned to future issues for contests and challenges in the Kids Corner.

For any suggestions, please e-mail us at kids@thd.org. We want to know who you are!







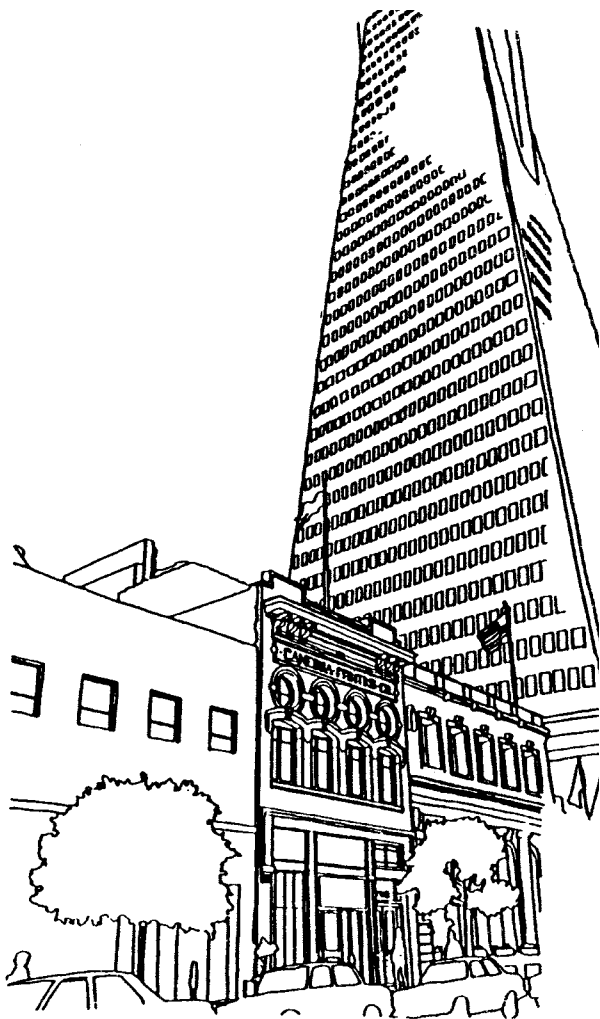
## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Stan Hayes  
President@thd.org

Hello, again. I hope you're all doing well. That you and yours are, and have been, safe and healthy. And, that you're coping, global pandemic, economic free-fall, and national moral reckonings notwithstanding. It's been three months since my last column, a full season, from Spring to Summer. In some ways, it seems like minutes, with the days accelerating by. But, in too many other ways, it seems like years.

It's Summer, but it seems like a long, long Winter. Only warmer. Or, since this is San Francisco, maybe I should say cooler. Whatever else, the Summer fog is back, and the view is far from clear. Despite the uncertain times, though, we continue to be busy, working hard on your behalf to make things better. Here's an update on some happenings, many of them cyber, virtually of necessity.

**THD Board.** I'm pleased to report that THD once again finished the fiscal year comfortably and fiscally responsibly in the black. Revenues greater than expected and expenses less than anticipated. Just the way we always hope it'll be when, fingers crossed, we



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adopt a new budget for a new year.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 uncertainty, the THD board continues to meet monthly, now via Zoom. We are still deferring the Annual Meeting & Election, usually held in late-April, until it's safe to meet together once again. Current board directors and officers, who together comprise the 2020-2021 board slate proposed by the Nominating Committee (see last issue), have volunteered to serve until an election can be safely held, and with your eventual electoral consent (hopefully), then for the coming year.

**Virtual Events.** Zoom, Meet, Meeting, GoToMeeting. Just words, right? Not anymore, of course. Even if you're thoroughly videotelephonically challenged, no doubt you've experienced the joys (and/or the sometimes-infuriating frustrations) of one or many of these meeting apps, as you've cyber-reached out to friends, family, and colleagues. THD has made active use of Zoom and other such apps, sponsoring the THD Virtual Event Series, bringing together outstanding thought leaders in conversations on a range of idea-provoking and timely topics, all accessible from your living room.

Free to all, members and non-members alike have grabbed their favorite beverages and snacks and joined THD online for happy hours in personal conversations between local best-selling author David Talbot and local journalist and KALW radio broadcast host Rose Aguilar and, separately, District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin and Joe Eskenazi, managing editor and columnist of Mission Local. Thanks to the outstanding quality of these folks, both were outstanding events, with thoughtful and lively discussion and large numbers of engaged and enlightened listeners signing up to enjoy the conversation. More of these events are planned. So, stay tuned, logged in, signed on, or interfaced, as you prefer.

**Planning.** We're tracking and engaging in a lengthy list of planning projects in the neighborhood, many in mid-stream, with more to come. One of the most important of these involves the historic Verdi Building at 659 Union Street, badly damaged by the 2018 St. Patrick's Day Fire. A developer has proposed two alternative plans, both of which would demolish the existing building. The preferred plan was proposed to add a four-story restaurant and hotel on top of the Verdi Building, demolish an adjoining garage at 1636 Powell, and replace it and the adjoining space between the Verdi Building and the garage with an eight-story, 85-foot modern style, metal-and-glass residential/hotel wing, for a total of 97 units and 14 hotel rooms.

THD wrote a letter expressing our strong opposi-

tion to the developer's proposals, urging him to restore the Verdi Building "as quickly as possible." In it, we said: "Carl Nolte wrote that: 'Of all San Francisco's special places, North Beach remains the heart of the city.' We couldn't agree more. North Beach is the heart of San Francisco, Washington Square is the heart of North Beach, and, built in 1914, the historic Verdi Apartment Building...is one of the most significant and prominent anchors of Washington Square."

We expressed our concerns that the proposed design is so at odds with community norms of height and scale that, at best, it will face many years of community opposition, that it is too tall and massive, that the new residential units would be nearly all high-end market-rate condominiums effectively eliminating 28 former affordable, rent-controlled apartments, that it would cause significant loss of street-level commercial space, and that it would cast impermissible shadows on Washington Square Park. In closing, we stated that: "As currently proposed, the project is so inconsistent with the height and scale of North Beach and its prominent and historic setting overlooking Washington Square...major modifications to your project must be made."

Though no revised plans have been submitted to the Planning Department, the developer has responded that the project is currently being redesigned to respond to concerns raised by THD and others in the community. We'll keep you posted.

**Elsewhere in This Issue.** There's lots to read in this issue of *The Semaphore*. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a full page on the removal of the Columbus statue (with great pix taken in the middle of the night) and suggestions as to what should replace it; a two-page spread of transcript highlights from recently transcribed Italian-American oral histories; a piece by Termeh Yeghiazarian on why she enjoyed transcribing Peter Macchiarini's oral history, even though it was difficult; several articles on the impact of the coronavirus on our neighborhood, including transportation impacts, restaurant and retail impacts, and attempts to ease some of the economic woes of small businesses; an article on the difference between "slow streets" and "shared spaces" by new Transportation Co-Chair Joey Babbitt; a new "Kids Corner" column by Sarah Kliban; and the usual committee and other reports, especially highlighted by District 3 Supervisor Peskin's column.

As always, to join or to get information about THD, please come to our website at [thd.org](http://thd.org), or send an email to [hello@thd.org](mailto:hello@thd.org). If you'd like to get involved, just go to [thd.org/member-info](http://thd.org/member-info). Once again, it takes a community to make things safe. THD wishes you all the very best during this challenging time.



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# GOODBYE, COLUMBUS

by Judy Irving  
judy.irving@thd.org

Last year, just before the Italian Heritage Parade, the statue of Christopher Columbus at the Coit Tower parking lot had his face and hands painted red. Rec/Park workers scraped it off. This year, the statue became part of an intense national reckoning after the brutal murder of George Floyd, as our culture of colonialism, white entitlement, and police brutality were questioned as never before. Statues began coming down all across the country: men who'd killed Native Americans and African Americans, ripped off working people, built dynasties based on greed and fraud. Christopher Columbus, atop Telegraph Hill, was vandalized three times in ten days during early June. After discussions with Rec/Park, the Mayor's office checked in with our District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin and the only Italian-American Supervisor, Catherine Stefani: Ok to take it down? Yes. Before dawn on Thursday, June 18th, the red-faced statue was craned away, taken to an undisclosed off-site Arts Commission warehouse. Scrawled in chalk on the remaining pedestal were the letters "NLM" (Native Lives Matter).

Now, who or what should replace it? The Arts Commission called for suggestions, and the response has been robust. Ideas include Benny Bufano's St. Francis, A.P. Giannini, Nancy Pelosi, Emperor Norton, no statue at all, Juana Briones, return the Columbus Statue, Tony Bennett, Gregory Corso, Don Vito Corleone, and many, many more.

Chris Buffalino: "I have always found the story of Columbus inaccurate and confusing as he didn't land here after all, yet was credited with the discovery of our country—another falsity. My suggestion for replacement would be Amerigo Vespucci for whom our country is named, is also Italian, and who correctly identified that the Americas were new continents between Western Europe and Eastern Asia."

Ricardo Rodriguez-Vidal: "No-brainer: A respectful and realistic representation of the original inhabitants of the area before they were enslaved, exploited, abused, and decimated by colonizers. An Ohlone family sculptural group, to be designed and approved by indigenous artists. This part of our City's history has been ignored for too long. We have an ideal opportunity now to honor & recognize them, having them overlook their land, the Bay & Alcatraz Island. This is not the time to divide us by honoring specific religious or political figures, but to unite us in celebrating the true and accurate historical background of our City."

Carrie Chee: "Please consider a statue of Thurgood Marshall and the Port of Chicago Trial at Angel Island. This historic trial is considered by many as the seeds of



Last moments in front of Coit Tower.

the Civil Rights Movement. The Port Chicago 50 were considered mutineers. They ended up desegregating the Navy. A little-known part of Bay Area history."

Danny Macchiarini: "From just an aesthetic point of view, that statue was a terrible piece of decadent social realist art. The Columbus statue was sculpted by Count Vittorio di Colbertaldo of Verona, one of Benito Mussolini's hand picked ceremonial bodyguards known as the Fascist 'Black Musketeers.' I suggest that a statue of Leonardo Da Vinci be placed in Pioneer Park where Columbus was. Da Vinci was a real pioneer and discoverer in science, engineering, great art, and rebirth of knowledge from the same era as Columbus. There is good evidence that he was gay too, which also reflects another important part of our contemporary San Francisco population."

Jon Golinger of the nonprofit organization Protect Coit Tower, on behalf of the family of Lillie Hitchcock Coit, suggests that the sculpture she commissioned, originally designed to be placed in front of Coit Tower, should now finally take its rightful place there (the *San Francisco Volunteer Firefighters Memorial* by Armenian-American sculptor Haig Patigian, currently in Washington Square Park):

"In 1851, seven-year-old Eliza 'Lillie' Wyche Hitchcock and her parents moved from Kentucky to California. Young Lillie was deeply affected by a series of fires, one of which nearly claimed her life. Soon after

arriving in San Francisco, Lillie watched two of her friends burn to death when a building they were playing in suddenly caught fire. Lillie was rescued from the flames by John Boynton, a volunteer member of Knickerbocker Engine Company, Number 5. Boynton chopped a hole in the roof of the building, let himself down on a rope, put Lillie on his back, and climbed to safety.

"Lillie and her family immediately and permanently became friends, financial supporters, and vocal champions of the firefighters of Knickerbocker Engine Co. No.5. In October 1863, Lillie was made an honorary member of the engine company, given her own badge and fire helmet, and thereafter held a prominent place in festivities and parades celebrating San Francisco's firefighters. When Lillie Hitchcock Coit – she married Howard Coit, who predeceased her – died in 1929 at the age of 86, she left one-third of her sizeable estate to the City of San Francisco 'for the purpose of adding to the beauty of the city which I have always loved.'

"Lillie's generous bequest to San Francisco paid for two projects that were completed in 1933: the construction of Coit Tower itself and the creation of a memorial sculpture to commemorate San Francisco's volunteer firefighting companies, who had saved not just young Lillie but the young city of San Francisco many times over. The *San Francisco Volunteer Firefighters Memorial* depicts three volunteer firefighters risking their lives to save the lives of others. One of the firefighters is carrying a young woman to safety, just as Boynton rescued young Lillie."

"Why Lillie's *Firefighters Memorial* ended up separated from Coit Tower and instead was placed in Washington Square at the time of its dedication on December 3, 1933 is not clear from the record. Perhaps it was because Washington Square in the heart of North Beach was considered a more prominent place at the time for such an important memorial tribute. Perhaps it was because, at the time, Coit Tower was not yet a beloved part of the city's skyline but merely a newly constructed curiosity that did not even open to the public until nearly a year later on October 12, 1934.

"The *San Francisco Volunteer Firefighters Memorial* was created as a counterpart to Coit Tower to celebrate San Francisco's unique character and its people's enduring hope and resilience in the face of repeated disaster. Reuniting these pieces to honor the best of the San Francisco spirit is something that we hope will merit serious consideration."

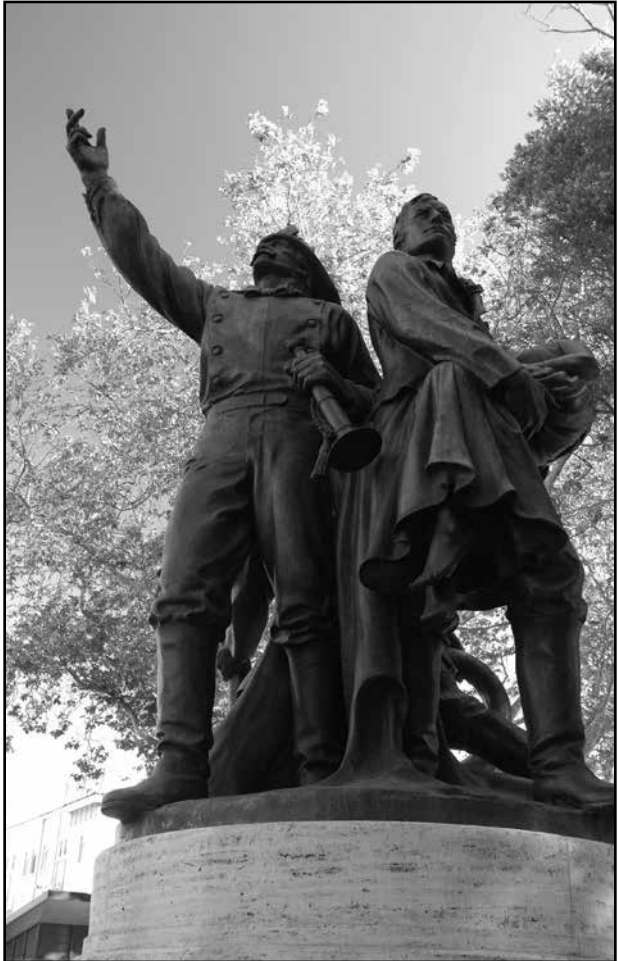
Who—or what—would you choose? Contact the Acting Director of Cultural Affairs at the Arts Commission: [rebekah.krell@sfgov.org](mailto:rebekah.krell@sfgov.org)



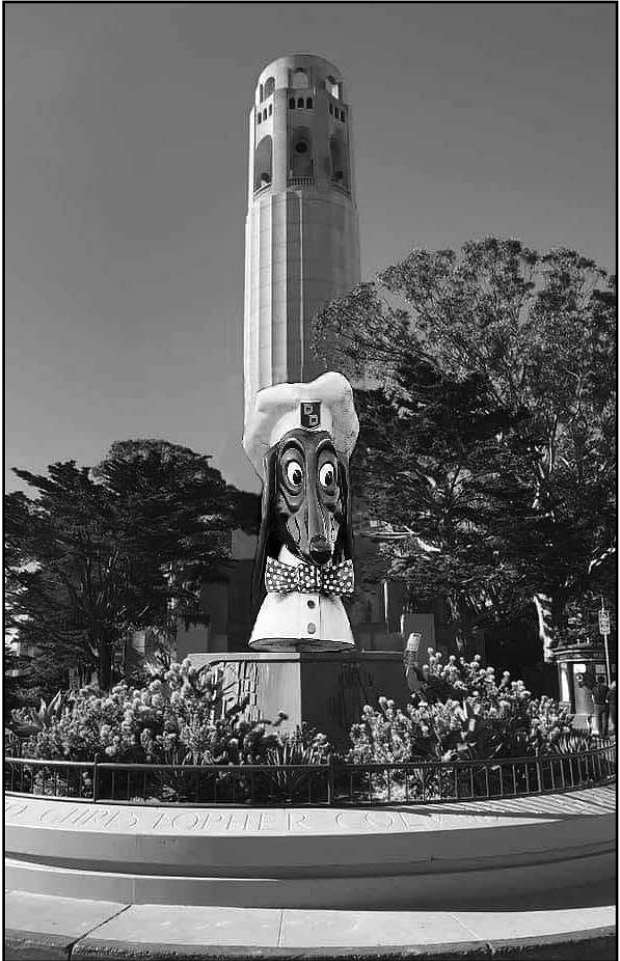
(Uncredited photos were taken by an anonymous bystander.)



Heading to a new world.



Firefighters statue in Washington Square. © JUDY IRVING



Replacement contender?





## DISTRICT 3 SUPERVISOR REPORT

by Supervisor Aaron Peskin  
aaron.peskin@sfgov.org

**T**hank you to my community at the Telegraph Hill Dwellers for hosting me for a “State of the City” conversation with Joe Eskenazi last month. More than 250 neighbors tuned in for the discussion about San Francisco’s changing times and how we’re facing it together.

Since my time at the Emergency Operations Center, California and San Francisco have begun the challenging road to recovery—which continues to be a series of two steps forward and one step back. My top priority has been charting a path for the City to re-open safely.

### Economic Recovery: Starting with Small Businesses

As the Co-Chair of the City’s Economic Recovery Task Force, along with City Assessor Carmen Chu and Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, I’ve spent most of my time negotiating an overhaul of the City’s business tax structure, legislating small business relief, and piloting the Shared Spaces program in North Beach.

By this November’s election, you can expect a Gross Receipts ballot measure that rebalances our business tax burden from small businesses to the City’s largest corporations, while standardizing rates across our most cost-sensitive industries. The other key component will be a mechanism to “unlock” the business tax revenue voters approved in 2018’s June and November elections, which the City has been collecting but hasn’t been able to spend while the opposition litigates in California’s courts. Voters overwhelmingly approved both 2018 Prop C measures because we know that housing our homeless population improves conditions for everyone, including our small businesses. We also know that our economy and workforce are stronger when parents can afford reliable childcare. This business tax overhaul will finally eliminate payroll taxes, exempt small businesses, and free up more than \$300 million of unspent “Proposition C” funds for investment into universal childcare and homeless services and housing.

In North Beach, we’re seeing the success of a Shared Streets program piloted by the North Beach Business Association (NBBA), as restaurants begin to come back to life by repurposing areas of the public realm to increase social distancing and allow for al fresco dining. Many thanks to Lee Hepner in my office who spent hours coordinating with stakeholders and going over public health and safety protocols. This program will only continue to be successful if we are vigilant about masking, social distancing, and cleaning.

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# THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

My office has also spearheaded a package of small business relief efforts, including permit streamlining and fee waivers, with input from NBBA, Discover Polk, and the Lower Polk CBD. Look for more creative repurposing of the public realm!

Speaking of economic recovery, I hope you will please support our fundraising efforts to help our crabbing and fishing community recover quickly from the Pier 45 fire that wiped out millions of dollars of handmade equipment: <https://charity.gofundme.com/en/campaign/pier-45-crabbers-relief-fund>.

### Keeping SF Moving: Transportation Recovery

I am also Co-Chairing our Transportation Recovery Workgroup, along with San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Director Jeffrey Tumlin. Last month, the SFMTA Board approved a revised budget that decreased Muni expenditures by \$30 million for FY 2021 and \$54 million for FY 2022, largely by keeping vacant staff positions unfilled. We’ve still got a long way to go to get Muni going at top service, but, for right now, we are focused on providing safe and affordable transit for essential workers and hospital and healthcare visits. Future budget planning includes CARES Act federal relief, a transportation bond, and General Fund support.

District 3 residents who asked for increased service on the Folsom/Pacific 12 line will be happy to know that we added two extra buses to help with overcrowding. And we are moving forward with transit-only lanes across the City to speed up essential service and in advance of plans to bring metro subway trains above ground for modified service, starting in August. Our goal is to reclaim at least 70% of our former service levels, we hope as early as 2021. Thankfully, we invested in a new bus fleet before the pandemic, so our focus will be maximizing that fleet in the months ahead.

Finally, a special thank you to THD’s former Transportation Co-Chair, David Becker, and NBBA for

working with the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) to finalize plans for improvements to the Columbus, Stockton, and Green intersection. At the community’s request, SFMTA engineers analyzed whether a pedestrian scramble could be implemented but found the intersection would not support that technical design. They had other options, however, including a new mid-block crossing and signal retiming, which the SFCTA Board funded at last month’s meeting.

### Safety First: Testing and Public Health Protocols

Working with the Department of Public Health and the City Attorney’s Office, we’ve begun to establish protocols for re-opening everything from hotel rooms to music rehearsal studios to fitness clubs. At the center of all of this policy work is the need to protect our essential workers.

I have also been focused on mitigating the spread of COVID-19 within our congregate settings, including our SRO residential hotels, where we know residents are most vulnerable to exposure. My office has created a free SRO testing program in partnership with Chinese Hospital and our Department of Public Health and recently worked to create criteria for decedent testing and reporting.

As we increase culturally competent and free testing citywide, our next focus will be contact tracing, both through employers and social networks. My chief concern is that this information be protected and only used to help public health officials understand how the virus is being transmitted, so we can contain it and support our residents impacted by the virus with wrap-around services.

In the months ahead, I’ll be partnering with various neighborhood leaders on more virtual recovery updates, and I hope that you’ll join!

See you in the neighborhood,  
Aaron



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## FROM THE EDITOR

by Cap Caplan  
cap.caplan@thd.org

Are pets doing well in the pandemic? “Better than that,” I surmised, looking at my basset hound, Ace. More walks, more belly rubs, and especially more time with owners staying at home.

But pets were not my concern—quite the opposite: It was people, especially those individuals, perhaps seniors, living alone, lacking companionship, or feeling isolated, about whom I was worried.

The negative impacts of loneliness on health are well-documented: high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, disability, cognitive decline, and depression.

At the same time, research studies have clearly shown the mental health benefits of having a pet—reduced stress and anxiety, a lessened sense of loneliness, increased calm and heightened mood, and more.

Even without this information, people know, as Judy Irving says, “how important companion animals are in this time of no-contact-with-other-human-beings. No hugs, no handshakes, no standing even close, but you can cuddle with your cat!”

Given the uncertainty of the pandemic’s duration and the recognized benefits of pet ownership, I decided to query local rescue groups to find out what they could offer.

### SAN FRANCISCO ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL (SFACC)

I started with this organization as it was the one that rescued a stray basset hound I named ‘Guinevere.’ City-run, SFACC is responsible for dogs, cats, small animals—strays, surrenders, hoarded, lost, abandoned, unclaimed, hurt. On its website ([www.sfanimalcare.org](http://www.sfanimalcare.org)), I saw some dogs and kitties but most plentiful were small animals—a beautiful pair of birds, a rabbit, a hamster, and Rocky, a male guinea pig.

Science suggests that even watching fish in an aquarium can help reduce muscle tension and lower pulse rate. So, you might want to adopt Joni and her two guy pals, blue and gold tropical fish. SFACC will transport them, tank and all, to you.

Deb Campbell, a staff member, told me, “The demand for adopting and fostering animals has been tremendous. We don’t have enough animals to go around!” But, she went on, “there are many ways to help shelters and rescue groups even if you can’t have an animal in your life. You can make cat or dog toys or donate treats and food.”

### MUTTVILLE SENIOR DOG RESCUE

Muttville focuses exclusively on senior dogs (seven and older), “once considered ‘unadoptable’ and routinely euthanized in area shelters.”

Patty Statton reported how adoption and foster numbers had really gone up as a result of “shelter-in-place” regulations, as “so many people have found themselves at home and wanting companionship.”

I counted 22 available dogs on Muttville’s website ([muttville.org](http://muttville.org)). However, as Statton explained, because there is so much interest, adoption applications are



Big Bird says good morning!

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# PANDEMIC PETS



At least I can hug my dog!

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currently suspended. However, she anticipates needing foster homes later in the year and suggests people go on the website to fill out an application. Check the website as well for courtesy postings of dogs from other rescues.

### GRATEFUL DOGS RESCUE

Kate Singleton, a board member at Grateful Dogs Rescue, seconded Statton’s explanation, adding, “Some individuals might have been leaning toward adoption and now have the time to commit to caring for and training an animal. Another reason: The idea that working-from-home might become permanent has also affected decisions about owning a pet.”

She offered that dogs come from a variety of situations: landlord issues, hoarding, pregnancy, transfers from other shelters, and medical reasons. Sadly, dogs hit by cars or otherwise injured are often abandoned when owners cannot afford to treat them. The organization pays for veterinary care for dogs like Ziggy Lilac, who had to have her foot amputated.

### GIMME SHELTER

Partial to cats? Give Me Shelter Cat Rescue ([gimmesheltersf.org](http://gimmesheltersf.org)) focuses on “rescuing (primarily adult and senior) cats from abuse, abandonment, and neglect.”

I talked with Lana Bajsel, who, in 2003, founded what is now the largest cat rescue organization in San Francisco. Gimme Shelter has saved (and rehomed) many older cats from euthanasia. The website offers photos and brief bios for cats and kittens currently available.

Like most rescue organizations, Gimme Shelter is doing virtual adoptions right now. An all-volunteer organization, it welcomes people to help in a variety of ways in addition to adopting and fostering its rescues.

Looking for something easier to manage?

### RATTIE RATZ

Rattie Ratz is dedicated to the “rescue, rehabilitation, and adoption of domesticated pet rats.” Since its start in 1998, Rattie Ratz has rescued and rehomed hundreds of these creatures. A wealth of knowledge about this smart, playful, loving animal appears on its website, [rattieratz.com](http://rattieratz.com). Though no adoptable rats might be seen, there are many available pets in foster homes.

And, when we no longer have to shelter-in-place/isolate ourselves, shelters will welcome visitors once again. Muttville will reactivate its Cuddle Club, an opportunity for seniors to spend an afternoon snuggling up to its senior residents. People can also visit KitTea Cat Café ([kittea.dg.com](http://kittea.dg.com)) offering tea, refreshments, and a lounge for playtime with felines.

I meant this piece to be entirely optimistic—animals finding homes in record numbers and people being helped. But I have to raise two important caveats.

A majority of people will, eventually, be going back to work. While one’s fish like Joni might not notice, and I don’t know about cats and hamsters, dogs are highly sensitive to any change in their routines. For some, suddenly being left alone could prove traumatic.

And how many of these animals, once their companionship is no longer needed, will simply be abandoned?

I hope pet owners keep in mind their animals’ own needs during the transition back to some sort of normalcy and look for ways to address them. Please: These animals were here for us; let’s remain there for them. If you really no longer want a pet, or just can’t keep it, see that it’s safely returned to a shelter or rescue organization. Let’s make pet ownership one of the good things to come out of all this.



Shelter in place with me, please!

© DAVID LIPKIN



# SLOW STREETS, SHARED SPACES

by Joey Babbitt, Transportation Committee Co-Chair  
joey.babbitt@thd.org

The average sidewalk is four feet wide, less than the six feet people are being asked to maintain between them during the pandemic. In response to the lack of space for walkers, the Slow Streets program for the Bay Area started in Oakland in April. The program’s objective is to limit through vehicle traffic on certain residential streets so people can use the road for social distancing without the danger of exposure to fast drivers. Slow Streets does not completely block traffic or affect local access and parking. The California Vehicle Code, allowing motor vehicles to have the right-of-way in streets, still prevails. But the opportunity to reallocate more space for people to walk, bike, scoot, and play has never been more possible.

For clarity, there is a distinction between Slow Streets and Shared Spaces, the permitting program allowing restaurants and retailers to set up business on sidewalks and in parking spaces. Slow Streets is being implemented by the SFMTA, while the Office of Economic and Workforce Development leads the Shared Spaces program, focusing on mixed-use commercial corridors.

At the start of June, North Beach had one Slow Street, Stockton, between Lombard and Bay, and a proposed Slow Street on Lombard Street from Stockton to Jones. North Beach also has two Shared Spaces corridors, Grant Avenue and Jefferson Street, in the implementation phase.

Unfortunately, our Slow Street on Stockton between Lombard and Bay was not an ideal choice. First, the steep incline makes it difficult to use for leisurely recreation. Second, the barricades have not been effective in deterring through-traffic. In fact, as cars traveling on Bay want to turn onto Stockton, the barricades have not prevented them. Third, because of the incline, cyclists, scooters, and cars travel at higher speeds, making it especially dangerous for pedestrians and vulnerable users.

While the neighborhood works to find a more appropriate Slow Street, modifying the barriers to make them more visible and effective and, perhaps, even more attractive, would be one improvement. Even if only a few SUVs are using the road, people will become discouraged and flee back to the sidewalks. It might seem obvious, but if more pedestrians are using the Slow Street, more people will feel safe to do the same. Unlike driving and cars and traffic, there is safety in numbers when it comes to pedestrians and cyclists.

Anecdotally, the barricade configuration that seems to work best for Slow Streets is three barricades at each entrance to the street, requiring drivers to slow down to an appropriate 5 MPH in order to proceed. (see illustration below)



Kids and bikes using the Page Street Slow Street.

© JOEY BABBITT

This design requires more barricades than are currently in use at each entrance. If the City does not have enough barricades, the trade-off will be to decrease the number of Slow Streets but make those that remain safer. In my opinion, having two blocks of “safe streets” that are usable rather than four that are dangerous and not being utilized by the community makes more sense.

The pandemic has changed the way we recreate, do business, and use our streets. To accommodate the shift,

we are reallocating more space for people and making the streets usable for everyone. We need to work together as a community and neighborhood to make the implementation safer. The key is community input and flexibility. What if the barricades looked less like construction signs and were more welcoming? What if we drew the longest hopscotch ever created in the middle of Stockton? More people using the streets will make them safer, and wouldn’t that also be such a lovely thing to see?



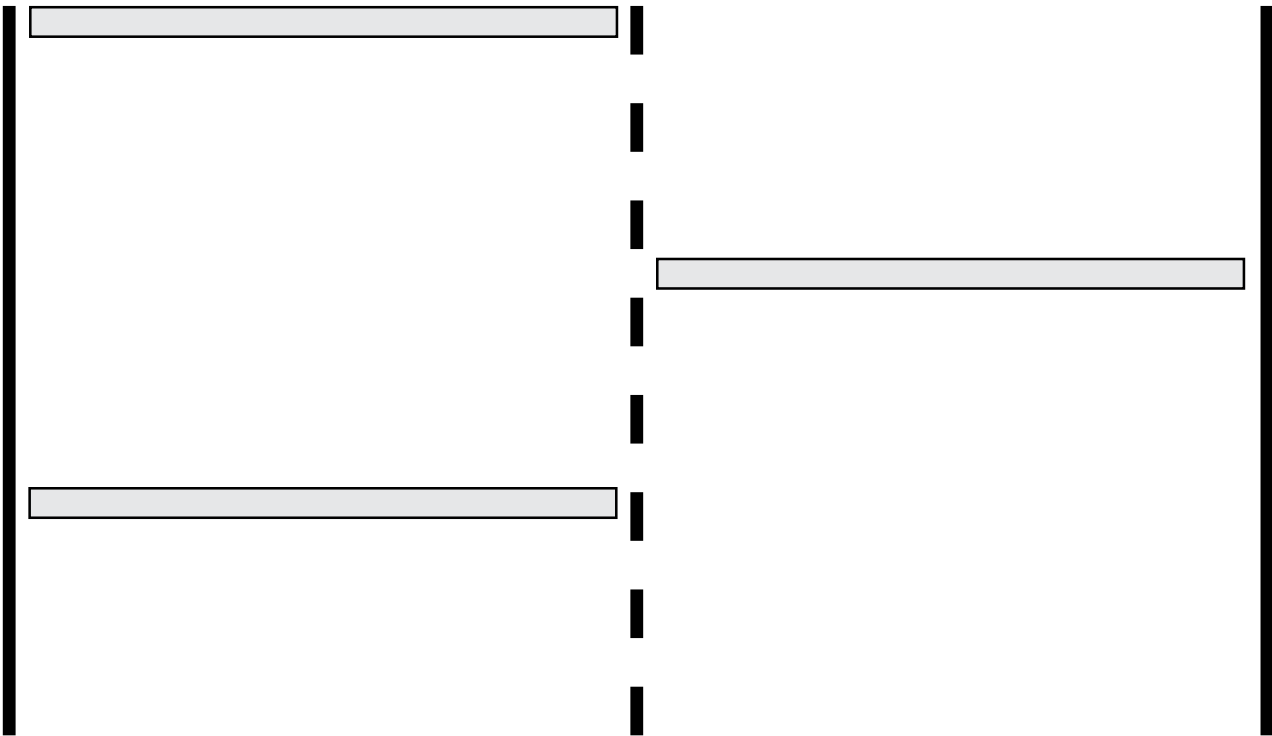
Slower streets = safer for kids.

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Slower streets are not just for restaurants.

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Neighborhood group forms a flash mob.

© JOEY BABBITT

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## ART & CULTURE REPORT

by Romalyn Schmaltz, Committee Chair  
romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org

I'm trying really hard not to begin yet another article with the same "Wow, how things have changed..." or "In these uncertain times..." or "as of this writing."

It's challenging, because here we are, as I write at the foggy tail of June, still in uncertain times, mostly still social distancing as we have, for about 100 days, living the unthinkable. But living the unthinkable has also given us a whole lot of time to think—and, I believe, that this is where Art and Culture can come in.

As you know, our local retailers and restaurants—the ones that have survived—are in deep distress. At the same time, artists (writers, musicians, visual artists, and performers of all stripes) and art venues, as well as the institutions and people who have made it their life's business to feature and support them (from galleries, to concert halls, to libraries, to bars and restaurants) are disappearing every day. You've probably donated to your favorite *places* in the hopes of having them there *when*, as we all now say, this is all over.

I believe this is Art and Culture's hour.

I'm on a team in the beginning phases of expanding and curating, with fierce imagination, North Beach First Fridays, and I'd love your involvement. The vision is to realize a kind of North Beach renaissance beyond

# FROM LIVING THE UNTHINKABLE TO RETHINKING THE POSSIBLE

First Fridays, but this is our starting point. As our beloved local businesses—all of them essential to the vitality of the neighborhood—softly reopen in phases, among the questions we're asking are these:

- How can we bring artists and local businesses together in safe and innovative ways to their mutual benefit?
  - What creative endeavors might we be able to take with our vacant storefronts?
  - How do we leverage reduced customer/audience volumes?
  - What can be done with expanded outdoor space? Indoor space?
  - What programming do we want to see, and how can we coordinate it, so that patrons can participate in several events on a single Friday night (and beyond)?
  - What are our possibilities for virtual events, both as supplements to physical events and as "back-ups," should future pandemic waves curtail our abilities to share public space again or even more than before? Can we have alternatives prepared in advance to keep the flow of Art and Culture steady in the neighborhood? (Yes, we can.)
  - How can we bring in people from all over San Francisco and the Bay Area?
- And so, I invite you to become part of the team.

This has been a year in the making now, but, of course, this year has been a wildly unpredictable one. Now that we're, as of this writing, a quarter of a year into living the unthinkable, I think we're ready to start rethinking the possible together.

I'm hosting a first First Friday artists' and merchants' input meeting, open to all. I would love if this could be in a venue, but I'm assuming it will be held on one virtual platform or another. To participate, just email me at [romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org](mailto:romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org), and I'll include you in the invite once I know where and how it will take place.

**What:** First Friday artists' and merchants' input meeting.

**Who:** anyone interested in participating in a bold new chapter in North Beach First Fridays, including artists in all genres, merchants, restaurateurs, bar owners, community activists, and neighbors.

**When:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020. 6:30 pm.

**Why:** because Art and Culture have always inspired us to thrive rather than just survive but also because Art and Culture need our help, too.

I look forward to seeing you in the flesh or on the screen, so email me to indicate your interest in receiving invitations and updates. Together, we won't just live the unthinkable but will rethink the possible. Isn't that what Art and Culture is all about in the first place? ✕



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# EXCITEMENT AROUND THE OPENINGS IN NORTH BEACH

by Julia Murphy  
juliamartinmurphy@thd.org

As of late June, life is starting to breathe back into North Beach restaurants and shops. There are more people on the streets wearing masks, more people starting to dine outside. Owners are positive as they focus on bringing the buzz of North Beach back, even if it happens in baby steps.

The City has encouraged more use of outdoor space by providing metal barriers for restaurants to put in front of their places. Tables are set up across street parking spaces, thus expanding dining areas and allowing six feet or more distance from one another.

Speaking with Kernan Teague, owner of Tupelo and Belle Cora, I felt his enthusiasm as he told me how glad he is to bring the heartbeat back into Grant Avenue and Green Street. Across Grant at Portofino, Franky works to bring out oysters, fish 'n chips, and Crab Louie to hungry diners sitting at tables covered in checkered tablecloths. A few doors away, Mo's waitstaff emerge with trays of omelets and burgers for patrons patiently waiting. On the corner of Grant and Green, Sodini's has created a fairly large outdoor space with seating and tables on green turf grass.

Right now, Maggie McGarry's is closed for dining as it does not have food but hopes to open mid-July for outside dining and mid-August for inside seating. Mairead McGarry, the owner, told me, "It's been a tough few months for everybody. We took the time to repaint, varnish, and touch up everything in the bar, which is more or less done. We are switching gears to opening outside on Grant. Serving on the Avenue will give us more of a chance to survive, to reach the day when folks are allowed back inside. It's not ideal, but we will give it our best shot." As the interview was ending, he added, "It's been nice seeing all of our old neighborhood friends in person this week as the bar/restaurants around us have opened already. That is what we have missed the most: our friends, neighbors, and human interaction."

All the restaurants are excited about the opening. However, they can serve far fewer patrons, significantly reducing their normal capacity sometimes by half. A proposal to close down Grant from Vallejo Street to Green down to Jasper Place is in the works. It would enable more social-distanced seating and help small businesses and restaurants serve more patrons. As concerned restaurant owners focus on safety for their customers, employees, and themselves, they must also find ways to be profitable with the limited capacity they now have. It has been about a week since the openings, and, indeed, many people are dining outside. It remains questionable, though, whether people feel comfortable dining at restaurants during the pandemic or apprehensive and afraid to come out.

There is a lot of love and gratitude amongst the owners, patrons, and neighbors. The support of the community is fantastic, and we are all in this together. ✂



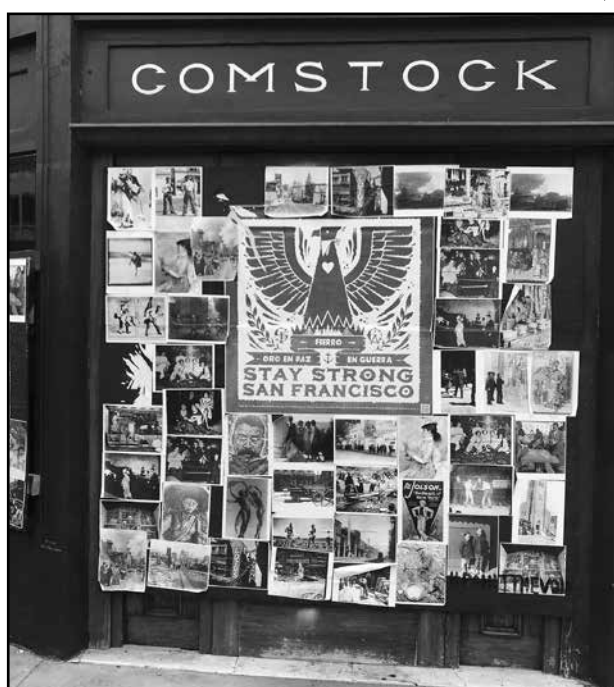
Creative repurposing of neighborhood spaces.

© DAVID LIPKIN



Trieste continues and expands its outdoor tradition.

© DAVID LIPKIN



Bars still await their chance to reopen.

© DAVID LIPKIN



Use of existing parklets has expanded.

© DAVID LIPKIN







# SILENCE ENABLES VIOLENCE: BLACK LIVES MATTER MARCHES FROM THE MARINA TO NORTH BEACH

by Romalyn Schmaltz

It was a rather sweltering—for San Francisco, anyway—summer day this past June 7. As we all know by now, protests of Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd, a black man already handcuffed and in custody when he was choked to death by officer Derek Chauvin, had erupted worldwide, including in San Francisco, leading to increased police and military presence and violence in the streets, as well as curfews in many cities. But curfews, the hinted-at threat of martial law from the U.S. President and a standing shelter-in-place pandemic order didn't stop three women and eventually an estimated 3,000 peaceful protesters from taking the fight from the Marina to North Beach.

Activists Edna Miroslava Raia, Sarah Page, and Guinevere Q. envisioned taking the Black Lives Matter movement deeper into San Francisco's more affluent neighborhoods, and they did exactly that. I had the good fortune to speak with organizers Sarah Page and Guinevere Q. and protester Niko Van Dyke (formerly of The Beat Museum). Rather than paraphrasing their stories—and since each of them is fiercely well-spoken, and since the whole movement is about making people heard, anyway—I'd prefer to let their voices ring out as they themselves articulated them.

Organizer Sarah Page: "We started with Edna posting on Facebook, 'Hey, we should have a protest in the Marina,' and I loved that idea, having been involved in organizing the initial Occupy protest at the Bank of America building. I'd always wanted to have a protest in the Marina, so I supported her mainly by reaching out to some activists to get advice, and then helping shape the route for the march and being responsive to Edna and supporting her. What really struck me about this experience was how we were very loosely organized and only started planning less than a week before the protests—and yet so many people showed up, and people of color took the lead the day of the protest, which was exactly what we'd hoped for. So, I think this is a really revolutionary moment in time and that people are just ready to come out in the streets for this movement. I posted about it on Next Door, as I live in the east Marina, and people from the neighborhood were excited to participate, which was nice to see also."

Organizer Guinevere Q.: "For years, protests have typically taken place in the working-class neighborhoods. Edna Miroslava Raia had the idea to take it to the rich, the ones who hold power and who influence policy that affects us all. The Marina District is a very wealthy and somewhat disconnected area—it's almost as if it's a different city from the rest of San Francisco. We wanted to get ALL of the San Francisco residents involved."

"Edna said that she didn't want the cops to know where we were planning on protesting, so she asked me to change [the map of the route we'd published] to just the starting location at Bay and Fillmore Streets in the Marina District—to the ending location—Central Police Station at 766 Vallejo Street in San Francisco."

"I did, and that ended up being somewhat important later on."

"We called and texted and emailed people in our network, and we asked them to do the same. I reached out to local press contacts from the music industry from the before [pandemic] times, when there was live music. I thought that maybe around 300 or so people would show—instead, it was over 3,000! People ran out of



Protesters fill Columbus as far as the eye can see. © KEITH SUTTON

their houses and into the streets to join us!"

"We marched into the streets, shutting down traffic, masks on mouths and signs in hands. We all realized the risks of gathering in mass during a pandemic, but the risk of doing nothing and allowing a system rotten with racism to continue to spread was far greater."

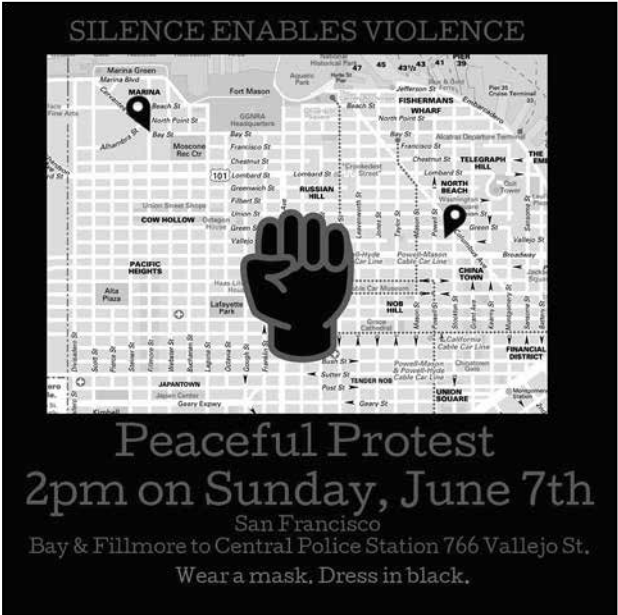
"As we turned from Bay to Columbus Avenue, some protesters stayed behind while others, who joined later, came looking for the march. Perhaps it was because there was no publicly posted route that this group of activists were able to intercept the police arresting a young African American man. Together, they shouted, 'Let him go!' and 'You work for us!' at the police."

"The police were quite aware of the fact that they were being recorded. This caused them to pause and evaluate what they were doing. One woman screamed, 'Do you enjoy traumatizing this man?' After a confrontation with protesters using words, not weapons, the police let the man go and they left, tails between their legs, as the people cheered."

"The police were heavily armed with guns that we pay for with our tax dollars. They positioned themselves like soldiers trained with military tactics, hiding behind a barricade. The protesters shouted, 'We don't need you!' and 'Why are you wearing riot gear?' and 'Why do you have guns?' and 'Defund the police!'"

"There were many spontaneous and powerful speakers, including a cancer survivor who bravely took off her hat to reveal her bald head. She said that she didn't want to be in a crowd during the pandemic because her health was compromised but that the cancer of racism in this system was worse than the cancer in her body."

"Another speaker stepped up to the megaphone to share that he was going for his daily jog when he saw the protest, and he decided to join. He spoke about how he was scared every day that he ran around his neighborhood that he would be murdered, simply for the color of his skin. The psychological stress was palpable. He



Facebook invitation to the march with route hidden. COURTESY GUINEVERE Q.

visibly held back tears while others allowed their own tears to flow freely down their faces.

"To be clear—the protests that have been sweeping the world are about more than the vicious murder of George Floyd. They are against systemic racism. Are you disgusted with the disproportionate number of arrests and incarcerations of minorities and people of color? Are you repulsed by police brutality? By the systematic oppression of an entire group of people by denying them access to basic resources, including safe and affordable housing, education, healthcare, and employment?"

"We are all responsible for ourselves and for each other. To idly stand by and to allow injustice to continue is to be complicit in a system that perpetuates hate, fear, and death. Silence Enables Violence."

Protester Niko Van Dyke: "After meeting with some people in North Beach, several of us walked down Columbus to Bay. Along Columbus, we were stopped two times by women in their seventies or eighties asking if the protest would be coming up that way, excited to be taking part but not up for the walk to Fillmore and Bay."

"Along Bay Street, as the march was well underway, there were people along rooftops cheering, people in windows and on balconies chanting along with the crowd. Cars would drive up to the edge of the crowd on side streets so their passengers could hold signs up in solidarity as horns were blared. I saw a toddler with a sign he made himself waving it in a window."

"Once we hit Columbus, we could see the crowd much more clearly going uphill, and it grew immensely at some point along the way. It seemed like a crowd was waiting for us in North Beach. All along the route were volunteers with big bottles of hand sanitizer and free bottles of water."

"I told friends to find me by looking for a sign that read 'DEFUND POLICE.' That was foolish, as the crowd was peppered with identical signs."

Even as this is the most difficult time in United States history that many of us can remember, I couldn't be happier and prouder to be in San Francisco, where we sometimes get it right; to live in North Beach, where we know each other and make art and work and fight together every day; and to know these fine, fierce folks willing to put themselves in danger for people who have lived their lives haunted by danger and injustice. They are, all of them, my heroes.



Protesters along Columbus. © HOWARD WONG



Anti-silence graffiti. © DAVID LIPKIN



A new awareness exploded on the streets. © HOWARD WONG



# TRANSIT AND THE PUBLIC REALM

by Howard Wong, AIA, Transportation Committee Co-Chair  
howard.wong@thd.org

## PANDEMIC-RESTRICTED TRANSIT

With plummeting ridership and revenue in March, Muni initially shrunk service down to 17 core bus lines, suspending service on 51 out of 68 routes, and closing underground subways. Gradually, nine additional bus lines were restored, and bus frequency increased. In June, two more routes were reinstated, including the venerable 30-Stockton bus. Bolstered temporarily by federal aid, Muni, nevertheless, has an uncertain future, as travel and work behaviors change. **Facing \$560 million in revenue losses over the next four years, Muni has threatened to cut 40 bus lines permanently, unless the City finds new revenue sources.** With 90% ridership drops and dependence on fare-box revenues, BART and Caltrain decimated service and face existential threats.

Necessity might change the Muni system forever, because social distancing decreases the ridership capacity of transit vehicles. For example, on my recent ride on the #8-bus from Market Street to North Beach, the driver skipped the busy stop at the Stockton Tunnel—due to “over-capacity” at a mere 15 passengers. The #8 is an articulated bus with 48 seats and 98 standing-room space. In the near term, mass transit will be more like “streaming particle” transit. High-frequency trunk routes will have copious transit vehicles that are a few blocks apart, reducing headways and over-capacity. To bolster neighborhoods, business, and equity for the disadvantaged, disabled, seniors, and youth, short bus loops could link shopping areas, schools, libraries, institutions, and transit hubs at the main trunk lines. The coronavirus pandemic is an opportunity for innovation in street design, digital management of traffic/ transit/ capacity/ transfers and the integration of 27 regional



A welcome sight: Muni restored the 30-Stockton bus into service after a 3-month hiatus.

© HOWARD WONG

transport systems.

## PANDEMIC-DRIVEN PUBLIC REALM

Despite decades of reliance on the automobile, the coronavirus pandemic has forced restaurants/bars/stores onto sidewalks and streets—in order to increase the square footages necessary for social-distancing, customer volume, and ventilation. Easing permit requirements and fees, the City has facilitated a European ambience, albeit a nascent charm still in need of umbrellas, tents, banners, landscaping, pavers, and colorful art

and design. Paris is accelerating its pedestrian streets projects. London is planning the pedestrianization of Oxford Street. During the pandemic, San Francisco’s “Slow Streets” program has created temporary car-free streets and recreation spaces in neighborhoods. For the congested northeast quadrant, though, parking management offers a challenge, since many residents lack garages, and specific businesses rely on car access. Like the great streets/ plaza/ parks of Asia and Europe, a worthy aspiration is a grand public realm that is economically grand, too.



## THD ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

By Terneh Yeghiazarian

I have been enamored of North Beach since the day I moved to San Francisco almost 30 years ago. Curious about its past and interested in its future, I have since volunteered for several projects to learn about the history and the cast of colorful characters who have built North Beach’s cultural fabric. Reading about history is informative, but hearing first-hand stories provides a more vivid image and helps develop a more personal sense of connection with a time and a place.

As a fellow artist, transcribing Peter Macchiarini’s oral history interview was an easy pick for me. Peter has been instrumental in building the cultural character of our neighborhood, and I wanted to learn more about him and how North Beach Art Fair got started. Along the way, I also learned about the life of Italian-American immigrants in the Bay Area in the early twentieth century, train hopping during the depression era, the SF longshoremen’s strike, traveling theater groups, and so much more—all heard through the voice of the man who experienced it all firsthand and told through words and forms of expression that reflect the era.

And now, it is a bittersweet moment as I wrap up this transcription. The act of listening in detail to a voice telling a personal story for a prolonged time creates a personal bond that is similar to reading a really good book you don’t want to put down. You feel personally invested in the characters and continue thinking about them long after you’re done. Peter Macchiarini’s interview is more than two hours of recording, but for such an eventful life, I, for one, wish the interview was longer. Watch for an excerpt of Judith Robinson’s interview with Peter Macchiarini in the next issue.



# TRANSCRIBING PETER MACCHIARINI



Macchiarini Creative Design.

© DAVID LIPKIN



# NORTH BEACH ORAL HISTORIES COME TO LIGHT

by John Doxey

Good things actually can happen to those who wait. Twenty-four years after they were recorded, the oral histories of some of North Beach's most notable twentieth century characters are now coming to light, thanks to a team of dedicated volunteer transcribers.

In 1996, long-time THD member and activist Judith Robinson interviewed 15 people who, in one way or another, helped shape North Beach as the center of Italian culture and tradition in San Francisco. Robinson's interviews are part of an oral history project, sponsored by UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library, to capture the stories of Italian-Americans with North Beach connections.

Many of Robinson's subjects were elderly when she interviewed them, and all had either lived or worked in or near North Beach for much of their lives, including several who were born and raised in the neighborhood. Some were born in Italy and emigrated to San Francisco seeking economic opportunity or to marry a fellow Italian who was already here.

The stories they tell in these histories bring to life the sights, sounds, and smells of Italian North Beach life in the early and middle decades of the past century—from neighborhood kids picnicking among the goats on an undeveloped Telegraph Hill and families in their Sunday best strolling through the Fort Mason tunnel to the circuses that came to Washington Square Park and the aroma of fermenting homemade wine that filled the air each fall after the grape harvest.

The picture was not all rosy, of course. Several of the histories mention the racist taunts that were commonly hurled when Chinese-Americans ventured into Italian North Beach.

Of the 15 oral histories conducted by Robinson in 1996, seven are now fully transcribed, and transcriptions of four others are underway. The completed transcriptions include those of Dante Benedetti, John Beviacqua, Matteo Ciuffreda, Stella Patri, Jimo Perini, Alfredo Pisciotta and John Valentini. These oral histories will soon be posted on THD's website.

After moving from Calabria to San Francisco in the 1930s, **Alfred Pisciotta** worked as a pipefitter at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, where he built submarines and destroyers during World War I. In his oral history, Pisciotta describes the upholstery shop he opened at the corner of Francisco and Stockton Streets, which became a neighborhood fixture for many years. Pisciotta also describes how he made wine at home.

Robinson: You get in, walk-on with your feet? Take your shoes and socks off?



Pisciotta's shop.

© JANET BEACH



The Pisciottas in their chicken yard.

COURTESY RITA PISCIOTTA

Pisciotta: Yeah. Women and children.  
Robinson: And that would make how many bottles of wine?  
Pisciotta: 150 gallons.  
Robinson: 150 gallons. Okay. And that was for your own use, your family?  
Pisciotta: Yeah.  
Robinson: When did you make wine? In the Fall, after the grape harvest?  
Pisciotta: October.  
Robinson: In October. North Beach must have smelled pretty good in October.  
Rita [Pisciotta's daughter]: You can always tell who was making wine. You can smell it if you walk by.  
Robinson: You can always tell. You can smell that aroma.  
Rita: It was a cool whiff of ... I can still remember the cool whiff of fermenting wine in the basement.  
Robinson: So, you don't make wine anymore?  
Pisciotta: No, no, no. It's too expensive.  
Robinson: When did you stop making it?  
Pisciotta: About 10 to 12 years ago.  
Robinson: That's pretty recent. Yeah. So now you have to buy your wine at the store?  
Pisciotta: Where it's more for me. Yeah.

**Stella Patri** was born to French-Canadian parents in Montreal and moved to San Francisco when she was four. Patri was 99 years old when Robinson interviewed her. Patri's history chronicles her 1906 earthquake experience, her early work as a hat maker, her work as a welder at Marinship in Sausalito during World War II, her marriage to an Italian-American newspaperman with whom she had three sons, and her later career as a classic bookbinder. In one section Patri describes the work she did repairing damaged books in Florence following the disastrous 1966 flood.

**John Beviacqua** focuses, in his history, on his family's boat-building business at Fisherman's Wharf and the ways in which fishing boat designs evolved as local fisheries changed and new engines were introduced through the early decades of

the twentieth century. Located at the foot of Jones Street, the Genoa Boat Building Company was founded by Beviacqua's grandfather, an Italian immigrant. Beviacqua's father, Joseph, inherited the business and kept it running until 1959, after which he became the head foreman for restoration of woodwork at the Hyde Street Pier.

In one section, John Beviacqua describes working at his father's boatyard in the summers when he was young. "I was a kid. I was going to grammar school. I liked being with my father. And we'd get up every morning, I guess around 6:30 or 7 o'clock. Breakfast was nothing more than maybe a cup of coffee, or something light ... And we'd drive right to the Wharf because we lived in the Beach and it was maybe a five-minute drive down from Jones Street ... I used to help my father maybe like hold planks, get tools, get blocks, help him like measure things.

And after, I used to take walks along Fisherman's Wharf. I used to go to the markets. I'd see the boats as they come on in. I got to know some of the fishermen. And I loved walking around Fisherman's Wharf. And then I would come back and would help work with my father some more. We went home for lunch. We used to close the shop ...

So, I hung out there year after year. Three months every summer ... I was not taught the craft of carpentry or boat building ... My father wanted me to go to school, and he thought that if I, somewhere along the line, that if I learned the craft, I would not go to school. So, he was not very anxious to teach me the craft that he knew ... And he was right: It is a dying trade. But there's a lot more to it than that. But I wish I would have learned it ... I wish I would have been a little more



Clouds.

© JIMO PERINI

aggressive and asked him how to learn, and I wish he'd had the patience to teach me."

**John Valentini's** history focuses on his experiences at A. Cavalli Bookstore, the Stockton Street landmark his family purchased in 1918. Valentini grew up in the Sunset District, but he spent nearly all his waking hours from a young age in North Beach, helping at the family bookstore, which he purchased from his father in 1978, and participating in neighborhood activities. Valentini remembers bringing Italian newspapers to Italian prisoners of war who were kept at Angel Island during World War II, and he recalls seeing crowds of men gathered outside the Vesuvio building (one of A. Cavalli's former locations) listening to Mussolini's speeches. He touches on his coaching experiences at the Italian Athletic Club and explains that the bookstore's founder, Flavio Cavalli, was so busy with other business activities in the 1880s "that he couldn't take care of the business. So he had his sister come over [from Switzerland] and had his sister run the store. And that's why you see 'A.' Because her name was Angelina."

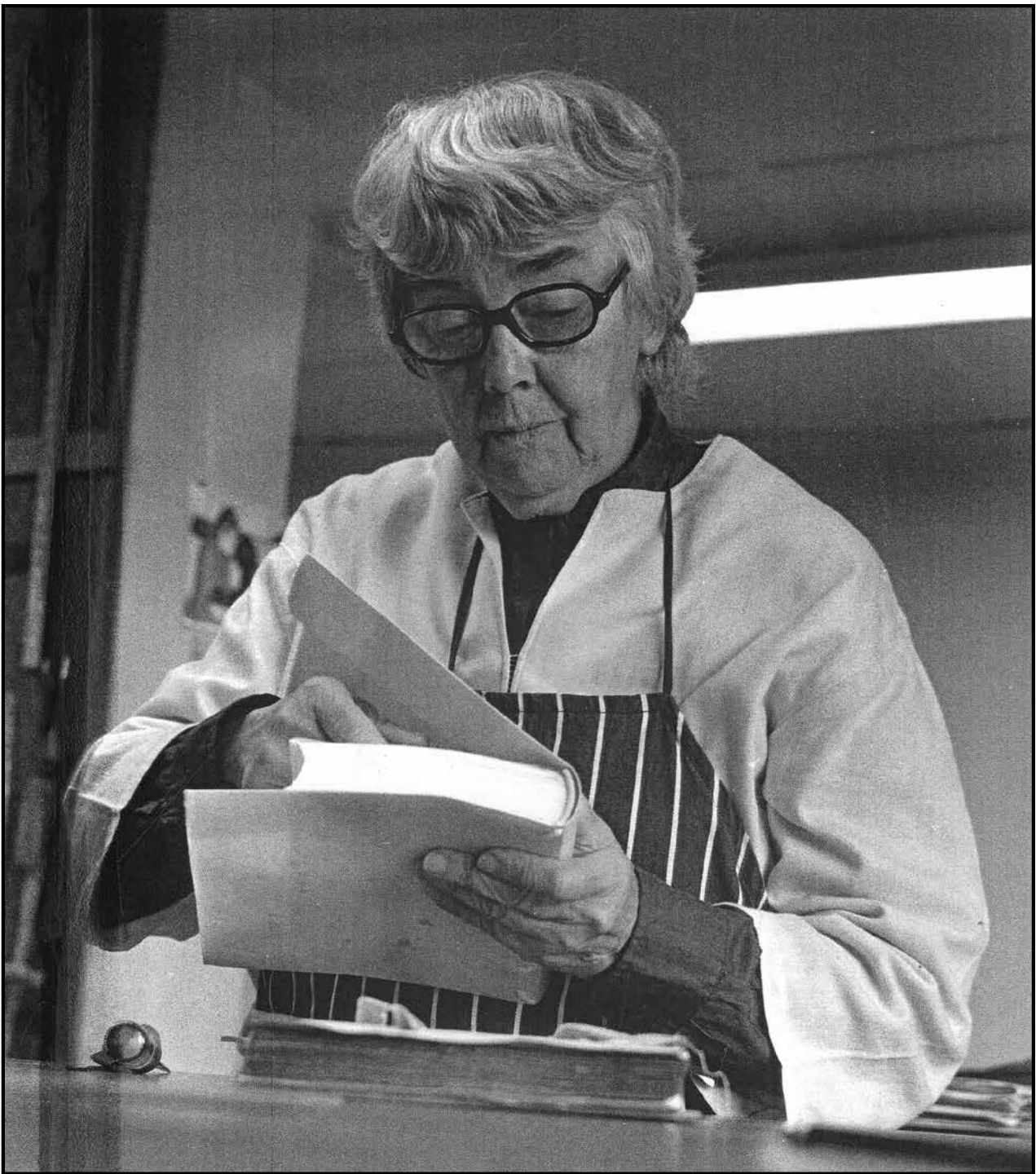
Celebrated photographer **Jimo Perini** was born in San Francisco in 1926. While he was still very young, his mother died, and his father was deported back to Italy. He spent several years at Boys Town in Nebraska, where he developed a passion for photography.

In his history, Perini describes how he learned to develop film at Vittalini Fotografia, a business located in what's now the City Lights building and how he built his first camera. "You made your own. You got a shoe box with a brick and tape. And you got enlarging paper, and you put it in the back of the shoe box, and you put a pinhole in the front, equidistant from the four corners. And there was no lens. You took the tape off from where the pinhole was. The light penetrated, and put it back, and you picked up the whole thing and ran to the darkroom and developed the print itself. You didn't have a negative, so you put two pieces of paper, face to face, and shined the light through 'em, and developed that, and you had a paper negative."

Perini also touches on the intelligence work he did with the Office of Strategic Services (a precursor to the CIA) during World War II, post-war life in North Beach, some of his major photographic assignments, and the two books he wrote.

Watchmaker **Matteo Ciuffreda** fell in love with a woman from San Francisco and moved here from Italy to join her in 1947. In his oral history, Ciuffreda focuses on his experiences at Matteucci Jewelers Store, a long-time presence at 450 Columbus Avenue, which Ciuffreda joined shortly after his arrival and ultimately took over after founder Rocco Matteucci died. In one section Ciuffreda describes how the historic, 25-foot-high Seth Thomas clock that famously stood outside the store mysteriously stopped half an hour after Matteucci's death in 1959. Ciuffreda couldn't figure out why the clock's pendulum had stopped. "Nothing wrong ... after 10 or 11 days I thought I've got to do this because it doesn't look good, the clock stopped outside there. So, I opened the clock and looked. Meanwhile, I pushed the pendulum, and, meanwhile, I was looking to find something wrong. A few minutes later, not a few minutes but 10 or 15 minutes later, the pendulum kept going. I didn't do anything! I didn't touch it. I was trying to find what was wrong. Anyway, to make short, the pendulum kept going and never stopped. And ever since then, the clock was O.K. It was perfect. That is, honest to God, the truth. Now I heard also there is another clock with four dials in San Diego ... It belongs to the biggest jewelry store in San Diego. When the owner died, the same thing happened there. The clock stopped. Now this is a thing that's weird, isn't it?" Ciuffreda died in 1999, just two days after the big outdoor clock he loved was wrecked by a truck.

Born and raised in North Beach, **Dante Benedetti** was a celebrated athlete, coach, and owner of the New Pisa Restaurant on Green Street. In his oral history, Benedetti recalls his North Beach upbringing, his father's winemaking, his boxing career, and his USF and little league baseball coaching days, among other things. Dante recalls that "We grew up together, Joe DiMaggio and I. And Joe was always a better ballplayer, you know. He got signed at 17 years of age by the New York Yankees. But I played with his brother Dominic. But Joe was brought up in Valparaiso Alley, about two blocks from here. So we used to go to the same play-



Stella Patri, master bookbinder.

COURTESY TITO PATRI

ground all the time. But he was always playing ahead of me. He was a great ballplayer. For number one he was a natural ... And then Joe got signed around 17 years of age from the New York Yankees. And a lot of people don't know this, but he was the first one to introduce to the Italian family that you could make money in sports. They thought it was just a hobby and a waste of time. Because a lot of the Italians, especially a lot of the fishermen, used to make their sons go down and sew the nets, you know and wouldn't even let 'em to participate

in school sports. And when Joe DiMaggio bought a home for his folks on North Point Street when he got the first bonus, the fishermen started turning around and buying gloves for their kids instead of making them go down and sew the nets."

*THD is still seeking help with transcription of four Italian-American oral histories. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact John Doxey at [jadoxey@gmail.com](mailto:jadoxey@gmail.com).*



Ciuffreda's old clock.

COURTESY SAVE AMERICA'S CLOCKS



# BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## APRIL-JUNE 2020

by Mary Lipian, Recording Secretary  
mary.lipian@thd.org

THD's Board of Directors meetings in April, May, and June 2020 were held "virtually" via Zoom.

### April 2020

The Board passed a **Motion** approving the appointment of Termeh Yeghiazarian to the Board to fill the remainder of the 2018-2020 term of Director David Becker, who moved away. Given the ongoing need to comply with shelter-in-place and other health orders of the City of San Francisco, the Board considered this motion via email instead of in-person at a regular meeting.

The Board discussed the information to be provided on THD's website relating to COVID-19, including public health recommendations, available neighborhood and City resources, and updates on local businesses available for takeout.

### May 2020

President Stan Hayes announced that Joey Babbitt has agreed to serve as Co-Chair of THD's Transportation Committee, joining Howard Wong.

Following a presentation by Treasurer Nick Ferris, the Board passed a **Motion** to approve THD's 2020-2021 annual budget.

Pursuant to a recommendation by Communications Committee Chair Al Fontes, the Board passed a **Motion** approving a Privacy Policy to be included on THD's website.

THD's new Special Committee for Membership Recruitment held its first "virtual" meeting on May 5, brainstorming how to maintain and grow THD mem-



## MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT REPORT

by Nick Ferris, Committee Chair  
nick.ferris@thd.org

THD has established Member Engagement, a new board committee. Member Engagement's goal is to attract new audiences by providing more value to people across THD's neighborhood. At the first meeting, committee members brainstormed ideas for reaching these audiences and decided online events were the best way to communicate with and attract new members.

The THD (Virtual) Event Series emerged from that discussion. It has already helped support a conversation between David Talbot, author of *Season of the Witch* and Rose Aguilar of KALW. Eighty+ screens were zoomed to the event (and the attendance was probably higher because frequently, more than one viewer is watching from one computer).

On June 25, Member Engagement hosted a special talk featuring Supervisor Aaron Peskin and Joe Eskenazi of KALW speaking about the changing times in our City. The event hosted more than 100 viewers.

Next, former Assemblymember, Supervisor, and Comedian Tom Ammiano talks with Tim Redmond of 48Hills about his new book, *Kiss My Gay Ass*, on July 16. It will be over by the time you receive your *Semaphore*. Did you attend?

Many more events will be coming up, and the committee will be partnering with a wide array of organizations to discuss issues and topics that are of most interest to our membership and the community. If you'd like to get involved or have suggestions for speakers and topics, please email Nick Ferris at [nick.ferris@thd.org](mailto:nick.ferris@thd.org). The committee meets once a month, virtually, and would like you to be a part!

bership, especially during this time of the pandemic when no in-person member meetings or activities can take place. The Committee, chaired by Nick Ferris and including Board members Al Fontes, Stan Hayes, Andy Katz, Sarah Kliban, Julia Martin Murphy, Patrice Ignacio Moll, Rachel Rodriguez, and Nancy Shanahan, began planning a series of virtual webinars and forums, with the first one featuring David Talbot, whose newest book is *Between Heaven and Hell: The Story of My Stroke*.

That first webinar, *David Talbot in Conversation with Rose Aguilar*, KALW radio host, was held on Thursday, May 21 at 5:30 p.m. Several copies of David's latest book were raffled to participants.

### June 2020

The Board discussed several pending neighborhood projects:

**Verdi Apartment Building.** The Board reviewed and approved a draft letter setting forth its opposition to the proposed total demolition and redevelopment of the fire-damaged Verdi Apartment Building at the intersection of Union and Powell Streets and Columbus Avenue. Among the reasons set forth in the letter for opposing the proposal are the excessive mass and height of the new building as designed, its incompatibility with the character of the neighborhood and the Washington Square Historic District, and the fact that it would cast a shadow on Washington Square Park in violation of the Planning Code Section 295 and Proposition K Park Shadow Ban.

Further, before proposing to demolish the building to the ground, the project sponsor made no efforts to retain the existing historic brick walls. In addition, the project represents the loss of the former 28 rent-controlled apartments to be replaced by a large number of market-rate condos. The final letter is posted on THD's website.

**Cannabis Dispensaries:** The Board discussed the two proposed North Beach cannabis dispensaries that are in the works. On April 29, the Planning Commission approved a proposed dispensary at 1335 Grant Avenue, with a condition that it could not be expanded into the adjacent (adjoining) space at 1335 Grant; that space must remain in an independent, non-cannabis-related retail use. A second dispensary is proposed at 899 Columbus across from the North Beach Library and Joe DiMaggio Playground. A Planning Commission hearing on this proposal is scheduled for June 18.

The Board discussed proposals and plans for THD's continuing series of virtual webinars and forums, including potential conversations with Tom Ammiano about his new book and SF Pride and with Supervisor Aaron Peskin on issues facing the City as a result of the pandemic.

THD's second webinar, *The Changing Times: A Conversation with Supervisor Aaron Peskin and Joe Eskenazi, Editor of Mission Local*, was held on Thursday, June 25 at 5:30 p.m.



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# TREASURER'S REPORT

by Nick Ferris, THD Treasurer  
nick.ferris@thd.org

In April, after a round of revisions, the Board approved the 2020/2021 budget unanimously. Looking back at the previous year, I am pleased to report that it was a very strong one for THD. We ended the year with a positive cash flow due many thanks to generous contributions by our members and the community.

As many readers will remember, THD's budget is based on a break-even year, so we aim to spend all member dues in the fiscal year through the work and services we provide. With the current Covid-19 situation, THD is continuing to evaluate how best to structure our finances and support the community during this time of need.

Our Member Engagement and Social & Programs Committees are doing very exciting work to provide value to membership. At the end of the day, we want to see how we can best use dues to provide more benefits during this isolated and dangerous time.

If you love this neighborhood or simply have some spare time and want to give back, I encourage you to join one of our committees doing tremendous work to make our neighborhood better, for all.



## THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Join a THD committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

### STANDING COMMITTEES

- Art & Culture: Romalyn Schmaltz romalyn.schmaltz@thd.org  
Budget: Nick Ferris nick.ferris@thd.org  
Membership: Andy Katz THDmembership@gmail.com  
Oral History Project: Judy Irving judy.irving@thd.org  
Transportation: Howard Wong and Joey Babbitt  
howard.wong@thd.org and joey.babbitt@thd.org  
Parks & Trees: Don Raichle don.raichle@thd.org  
Planning & Zoning: Mary Lipian and Nancy Shanahan  
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David Lipkin (Photo Editor) david.lipkin@thd.org  
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Waterfront: Jon Golinger jon.golinger@thd.org  
Communications: Al Fontes, Katie Hopkins, Leah Lovelace, Sarah Kliban  
al.fontes@thd.org

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE MEETS last Thursdays of each month. Call for time and location.  
986-7070, 563-3494, or 391-5652.

### LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- Central Police District Community Advisory Board: Daryl Babbitt  
Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods: Al Fontes  
Friends of Washington Square Liaison: Don Raichle  
Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group Member: Jon Golinger



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SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday August 13th, 5:30 PM

Virtual Wine Tasting (Spanish wine)

Co-hosted by THD and Maritime Wine Trading Co.

Join the Telegraph Hill Dwellers!  
Go to *thd.org* and become part of this active community!

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Vice-President: Nancy Shanahan — nancy.shanahan@thd.org  
Recording Secretary: Mary Lipian — mary.lipian@thd.org  
Corresponding Secretary: Katie Hopkins — katie.hopkins@thd.org  
Treasurer: Nick Ferris — nick.ferris@thd.org  
Financial Secretary: Andy Katz — andy.katz@thd.org  
Historian: Al Fontes — al.fontes@thd.org  
Immediate Past President: Judy Irving — judy.irving@thd.org  
Editor of *The Semaphore*: Cap Caplan — cap.caplan@thd.org

**DIRECTORS**

**Term: 2019-2021**

Romalyn Schmaltz  
Patrice Ignacio Moll  
Rachel Rodriguez  
Sarah Kliban

**Term: 2018-2020**

Leah Lovelace  
Don Raichle  
Julia Martin Murphy  
Termeh Yeghiazarian

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!

**There's no better way to be connected to your neighborhood and be a voice of the hill than by joining Telegraph Hill Dwellers, today.**

Join at *THD.org*. If you'd prefer to have a brochure and sign-up form mailed to you, please send an email to *membership@thd.org*. Already a member? Give one as a gift!

**Membership includes:**

- A one-year subscription to news & events via email and a quarterly paper, *The Semaphore*.
- Opportunities to be active in your community. Your passion likely aligns to one of many committees.
- Social and Art & Culture events throughout the year – attend and contribute!

Annual Dues:

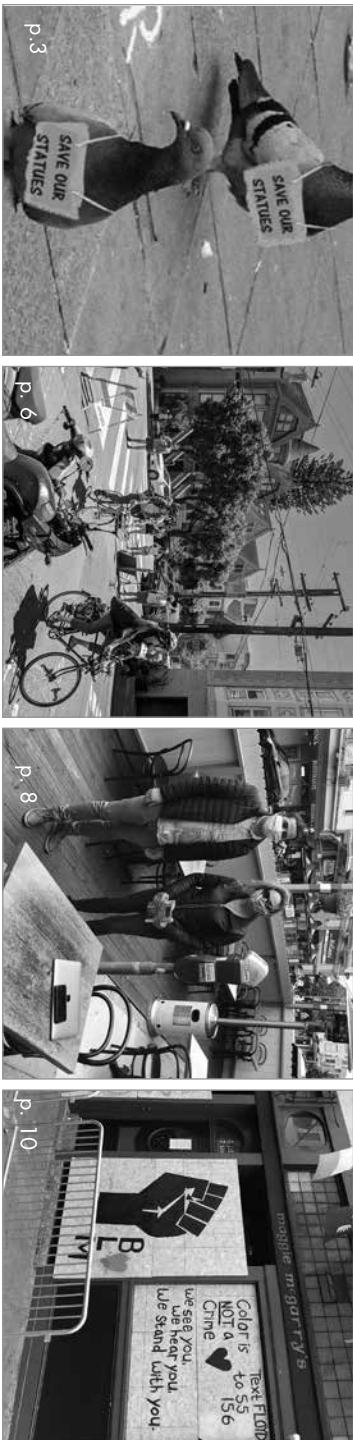
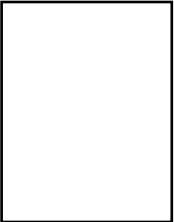
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|-----------------------------|------|
| Individuals.....            | \$35 |
| Households.....             | \$50 |
| Seniors (65 and older)..... | \$25 |
| Senior Households.....      | \$40 |

Join now or give the gift of membership at *THD.org* or email *membership@thd.org*.





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# THE SEMAPHORE

## #230 Summer 2020

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GOODBYE, COLUMBUS